

## ABSTRACT

A method and apparatus for switching a data packet between a source and destination in a network. The data packet includes a header portion and a data portion. The header portion includes routing information for the data packet. The method includes defining a data path in the router comprising a path through the router along which the data portion of the data packet travels and defining a control path comprising a path through the router along which routing information from the header portion travels. The method includes separating the data path and control path in the router such that the routing information can be separated from the data portion allowing for the separate processing of each in the router. The data portion can be stored in a global memory while routing decisions are made on the routing information in the control path.

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